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## NOTES ON GENEALOGIES OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI IN 1 CHRON. XXIII—XXVI.

*Gershon* : xxiii. 6—11.

THERE are here some difficulties as obvious as is their solution. According to the genealogies in Exod. vi. 17 and Num. iii. 18, 21 (= 1 Chron. vi. 2, 5)<sup>1</sup>, the sons of Gershon are two: Libni and Shimei; here we find Shimei in his place, but Libni's place is taken by Laadan (ver. 7). In the further development of the family, which is not given in any other book, first the descendants of Laadan are enumerated, and concluded with the words, "these were the chiefs of the fathers of Laadan," vers. 8, 9; then follow the descendants of Shimei in vers. 10, 11. But if we examine vers. 8 f. we detect that the sons of Laadan are really contained in ver. 8 only, while ver. 9 gives a set of sons of Shimei; the latter cannot be the same Shimei as in ver. 10, for firstly his descendants differ entirely from those in vers. 10 f. and they are also included, by the winding up in ver. 9, in the number of Laadan's descendants.

One will readily recognize, that of the two Shimei, the latter one in vers. 10 f. is the clan of the second son of Gershon; also that the elder house of Libni was in later times represented by a compound clan, which consisted of a chief clan, Laadan, which gave its name to all its members, and of a subordinate branch called Shimei.

There are however yet these difficulties about it. How is it that Libni's name is not given? True, we meet with similar cases in other tribes in the Genealogies, chs. i-ix; but, as Bertheau elsewhere remarks, it is hardly to be expected that the traditions about the original founders of the famous Levitical houses should have been given in varying forms; moreover, in ch. vi, Libni is in his place.

If Shimei in ver. 7 refers to the sub-clan of Laadan, then there is no previous mention of Gershon's real sons at all, either of Libni or Shimei; if however Shimei in ver. 7 refers to Gershon's son, the appearance of a branch of Laadan under the name of Shimei is still more surprising and unexpected.

Two ways out of this difficulty may be suggested:

A. That Shimei in ver. 9 is a mistake for one of the names in the preceding verse, so that ver. 9 in reality gives a subdivision of one of

<sup>1</sup> Num. xxvi. 58 is altogether (perhaps purposely) fragmentary and without proper order, so that it cannot be cited here as a witness.

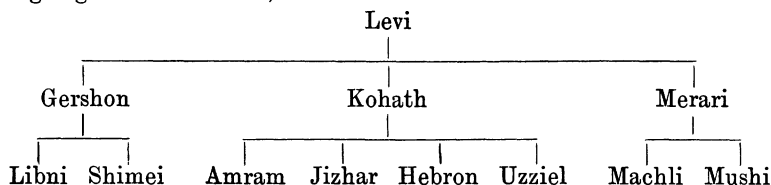


the end of ver. 8 is, according to A, limited by the subsequent subdivision, just as the total of "four" fathers' houses in ver. 10 is immediately reduced to three sections of Levites in ver. 11. Note in this connexion that the sons of Laadan, who in ver. 8 appear as co-ordinate "three," are in xxvi. 22 represented as an elder or chief clan and two subordinate ones. This seems to imply that the paternal clan Jechiel continued to be counted side by side with the two descendant clans Zetham and Joel. If so, the same might have been the case with that son of Laadan who, according to A, was the father of the subordinate houses of Laadan in ver. 9; so that even A might have yielded three houses for every branch, nine for the whole family. This is, however, artificial enough to render the other alternative more acceptable.

That Gershon's son Shimei had a nephew of the same name is not any more strange than the same occurrence in Merari's son and grandson Machli, xxiii. 21 ff, and several other similar cases.

There is another point which is more in favour of suggestion B than A, viz. the evident predilection in these chapters for a division of the Levites into sets and multiples of three "houses." Of Gershon's descendants Laadan and his subordinate or brother clan yield each three houses; Shimei's four sons are reduced to three counts as well (ver. 11): total nine. The four sons of Kohath are made to number nine "houses," just as many as Gershon. (The first two together yield three; the last two have six houses.) Of Merari's sons the younger has also three houses.

This is not accidental or a fanciful conceit of the author, but the designed result of the division of the Levites into twenty-four sections<sup>1</sup> "to correspond with" (לעמית xxiv. 31) the twenty-four courses of the priests (ch. xxiv), so that one Levitical section should always be in attendance ("ready at hand," ליד ver. 28) upon each priestly section as it took its turn. It is only natural to expect, and we should not be surprised to find, that the division of the ("twenty-four" thousand) Levites appointed for the Temple, xxiii. 4, should be spread over them in a fairly balanced manner; one might have expected that of the eight grandsons of Levi, viz.:



<sup>1</sup> This fact the writer has learnt from Bertheau, who quotes Ewald and others for it.

each one should afford three sections. But though a representation by three houses seems to be adopted, the plan is not carried through quite so exactly, but in such a way that Gershon has  $3 \times 3 = 9$  lots, Kohath also 9, Merari's younger son 3; this would leave 3 lots also for Merari's elder branch, Machli—Kish, and it would be so much fairer to give him an increased representation, seeing that Kish had, by marriage, adopted the inheritance of his heirless brother Eleazar, ver. 22. And since there are two counts wanting of the twenty-four, it may be with some reason assumed that the house of Merari—Machli—Kish—Jerachmeel, vers. 21 f., was in reality subdivided into three houses, which, for some cause, are not mentioned in this chapter. This assumption would satisfy a threefold requirement: it would supply the two wanting of the twenty-four Levitical sections; it would do this not by disturbing the harmonious division into sets of three, but by spreading it further and completing it; and it would more fairly balance the number of lots among the three families.

It will be seen that this argumentation clearly confirms the division of the Gershonites, according to suggestion B, into  $3 \times 3$  houses. But we shall be better able to judge of this after an investigation of

*Merari: xxiii. 21-23; xxiv. 26-30.*

It will be at once admitted that xxiv. 26 a + 28-30 are an exact repetition of xxiii. 21-23, and that this<sup>1</sup> presents a genealogy apparently complete, and in accord with the Pentateuchal traditions, which all give Merari two sons, Machli and Mushi. 26 b: "The sons of Jaaziyahu his son" is as unexpected as it is strangely formulated; it is, moreover, redundant, because repeated in the next verse. This passage clearly interrupts the connexion between 26 a and 28; and if a third descendant of Merari of the name Jaaziyahu was to be introduced, as Berthéau assumes, surely he should have been named before producing "the sons of Jaaziyahu his son." Berthéau not only does not seem to feel the impossibility of connecting this passage with 26 a, but (after rendering it in itself understandable by the proper pruning of the ו of וישראל) copies the whole of it, for its insertion in xxiii. 21, where he thinks it must have fallen out, because, as he opines, the two tables must have been identical.

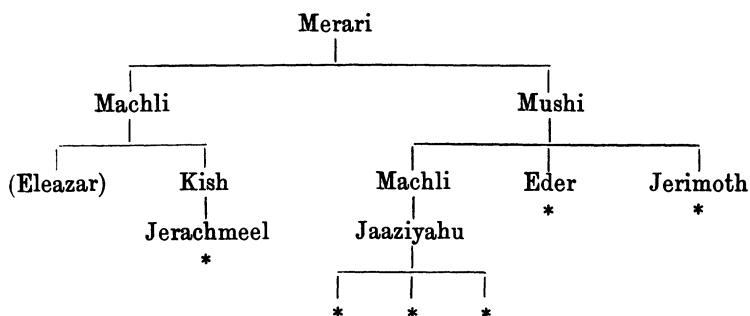
As to their being identical or not, it is surprising that he should not have noticed that in the latter list Gershon's house is wanting, and that the information about six houses is here carried further

<sup>1</sup> Or xxiv. 26 a + בני מררי (ver. 27 a) + vers. 28-30.

than in the earlier list, inasmuch as their representative houses (or heads?) at the time of the allotment are named (viz. the two houses of Amram, the one of Jizhar, the two of Uzziel, and Kish of Merari). May it then not be that the new name Jaaziyahu is, like the other five new names, the descendant of one or other house, and that his three descendant houses are the counts of that house in the twenty-four Levitical courses? This seems a probable solution of the difficulty, though the questions arise as to whose descendant these new names were, and why they interrupt the earlier Merari table. Perhaps they are the issue of Machli the son of Mushi, and belong consequently immediately after 30 a; having been omitted by one scribe, they had subsequently been added in the margin, &c., but were by the next copyist introduced after the mention of the *first* Machli, where they now appear. (Perhaps the name Machli was added to the marginal correction as catchword, and the copyist mistook this nephew Machli in ver. 30 for his uncle in ver. 26.) According to this suggestion the whole inserted passage in question belongs after וירימות, ver. 30 a, and may be emendated thus:

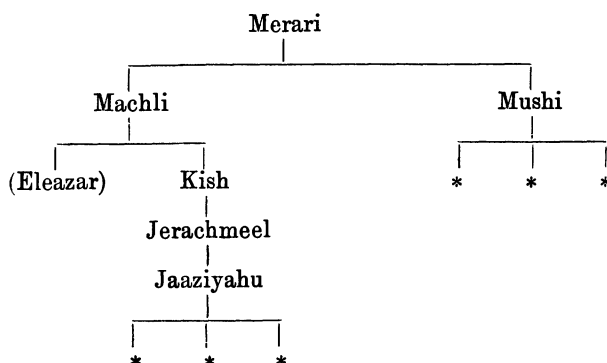
בני [מחלי] יעזיהו בנו. בני [מחלי] ליעזיהו בנו שהם ונו'

The house of Merari would then still yield six "fathers' houses" towards the Levitical courses, viz.:



Instead of the violent expedients of expunging Machli from among Mushi's sons, and of adding Jaaziyahu and his sons to Gershon's table, as Bertheau suggests, we obtain the same number of houses and a more satisfactory text by the above method.

On the same principles we might regard Jaaziyahu as the development of Jerachmeel of the elder house of Merari, vers. 28, 29. The catchword of the marginal gloss may have been מושי (ובני), intending that it belonged after ver. 29, and to be continued by ובני מושי in ver. 30, while the copyist by mistake inserted it *after* מושי in ver. 26.



The text would not require any more alteration than in the former case, viz. to read, after ver. 30:

בני [ירחמאל] יעזיהו בנו בני [מררי? מחלי?] לעזיהו (&c. as before)

This suggestion is even more pleasing, as it would render the three-fold division carried through the sons of Gershon ( $3 \times 3$ ) and Merari ( $2 \times 3$ ).

There is, however, still the possibility of Jaaziyahu being the spreading out of some other member, and indeed there are some reasons that tend to suggest that Jaaziyahu, this foundling in search of a father, should be ascribed to the earlier Jishiyah, ver. 21 (not the one in ver. 25, although the marginal gloss stood probably nearer to this one. Perhaps the catchword was ישיה).

The reasons are the following:—

In xxiii. 17 there is a note appended indicating that although Eliezer the son of Moses, had only one son, Rechabyah, the descendants of the latter “increased abundantly.” There would hardly have been cause for this note, where so many single persons of the same degree of descent from Levi are enumerated, unless it was to signify that in the division of the Levites into twenty-four houses the sons of Rechabyah took a comparatively large share; as we think, three houses through Jaaziyahu.

This may perhaps derive support from an investigation into the passage concerning those Levite houses that had special appointments, xxvi. 20<sup>1</sup>–26 seqq., as foreshadowed in xxiii. 4, 5. It appears from that passage, that in some cases entire sections of the Levites were thus specially employed, viz. three houses of Laadan, xxvi. 21 f. = xxiii. 7; both houses of Amram, vers. 24–28 = xxiii. 13–17, xxiv. 20 f.; and the first house of Hebron, ver. 31 = xxiii. 19, xxiv. 23 (where of course the words **הבני הראש** have fallen out after **ובני**). In the two other cases

<sup>1</sup> xxvi. 20 should begin **והלויים אחיהם**; so also corrects Bertheau.

where new names occur, viz. Kenanyahu of Jizhar (ver. 29; cp. xxiii. 18, xxiv. 22), and Chashabyahu of Chebron (ver. 30; cp. xxiii. 19, xxiv. 23), these may have been either single families selected for special purposes, such as are the musicians and gate-porters in chs. xxv and xxvi, or they are really whole houses, but not included in the twenty-four courses, because these were limited to attendance upon the Temple and its needs. Seeing that the superscription, xxvi. 23, includes Uzziel, but that he is not represented, it may be conjectured that ver. 32 originally began **ואחיו בני עזיאל**; and that the mention of Hebron's firstborn house in ver. 31 is only a repetition from xxiii. 19, xxiv. 23.

We now approach the house of Eliezer, second son of Moses. The passages xxiii. 17 and xxiv. 21 give the descending line, Eliezer—Rechabyah—Jishiyah; but xxvi. 25 f., another line is given, which goes far lower down than any other. Now this is in itself surprising; nor may we explain the consecutive "his son" in this verse all to refer to the same father Rechabyah, in explanation of xxiii. 17, that "the sons of Rechabyah increased abundantly." But all the same we may explain these names to mean "houses" that descended from Rechabyah, by expunging, with the LXX, the four latter **בני**; the **ו** that connects these names being unusual in descending lines with **בני**, e. g. iii. 10–12, iv. 25 ff., v. 4 f., confirms that emendation.

We assume, therefore, that these new names are co-ordinate houses descended of Rechabyah. (Shelomoth is singled out, perhaps because he was more prominent or better known.) If we now turn to the lists in ch. xxiv, we cannot help being struck by the resemblance of the names.

**ליצהרי שלמות** xxiv. 22.

**ישיה** xxiv. 21.

**יעזיהו ושהם חכור ועברי** xxiv. 26, 27.

**ושלמות :**

**חכרי** **ישעיהו וירם** xxvi. 25.

It is otherwise hazardous to draw inferences from similarity of names in Chronicles; but since several arguments tend in the same direction, it may be allowable to suggest that in ch. xxiv the verses 26 b, 27, belong after 21, and should read thus:

**בני ישיה יעזיהו ושהם (וירם) חכור (חכרי) ועברי (alias**

the last being a variant in the margin, that has subsequently entered the text.

Then follows ver. 22, **ליצהרי שלמות**.

Similarly xxvi. 25 f. should read:

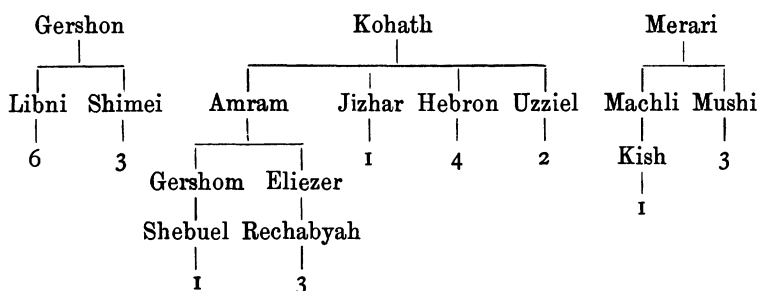
**ואחיו לאליעזר רחביהו בנו ישיה יעזיהו וירם חכרי** ver. 25.

**ליצהרי שלמות (בנו) הוא שלמות ונו'** ver. 26.



The double mention of Jizhar (in vers. 26 and 29) should not be more surprising than the two (or three) *לחברני* in vers. 30 and 31. The second house of Jizhar is moreover not of those employed in the Temple, and therefore does not appear previously.

The distribution of houses would, however, then not be of the same character as above, viz.:



Most of the above suggestions are made tentatively only; but the arrangement of the Gershon family under B, and the plea that xxiv. 26 a (27 a, first two words) and 28 should be uninterrupted, and vers. 26 b + 27 belong elsewhere, are put forward with confidence.

M. BERLIN.

*Note.* One more alternative may be mentioned: to regard xxiv. 27 a as a variant of 26 b, and this and what follows to be resolved into: בני (מררי) חכר יסידו בנ ושהם חכר; this would give one house more to their paternal stem; on the other hand, to count of Laadan, xxiii. 8, only Zetham and Joel, in accordance with xxvi. 22 (but cp. xxiii. 8, "three"). If the four in ver. 27 are ascribed to Rechabyah there would ensue a division in sets of 4, viz. Gershon 8; Kohath 12; Merari 4.